

Media Release

Mr Colin Brooks MP

Minister for Child Protection and Family Services

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Thursday, 8 September 2022

HONOURING ACHIEVEMENTS IN KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

The Andrews Labor Government is celebrating the exceptional efforts and dedication of Victorians who keep children safe and families strong.

As part of Child Protection Week, Minister for Child Protection and Family Services Colin Brooks has announced the winners of this year's Victorian Protecting Children Awards.

The annual awards recognise child protection workers, foster, permanent and kinship carers and the community sector, as well as government and academic organisations that demonstrate excellence in working with children, young people and families.

The winners come from all parts of Melbourne and regional Victoria and include dedicated foster carers, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, a COVID-19 response team and a youth advisory group.

In its 19th year, the awards in 11 categories are dedicated to the respected and inspirational leader in child protection, Robin Dennis Clark (1936-2001).

The awards also recognise excellence in child protection practice through individual and team awards and the Chief Practitioner's award.

The 2022 Victorian Protecting Children Awards winners are:

- Robin Clark Leadership Award – Deb Tsorbaris, Centre for Excellence in Child & Family Welfare
- Robin Clark Making A Difference Award – COVID-19 Emergency Response for Child and Young People (CERCY), MacKillop Family Services and Ability Assist
- Minister's Award for Innovation in Protecting Children – Emma Toone, Berry Street
- Chief Practitioner's Award – Natasha Sergent, East Division, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Carer Award – Toni and Paul Gauntlet, MacKillop Family Services
- Engaging Kids in School Award – VACCA Education Team, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- Keeping At Risk Young People Safe Award – Emily Nester, Berry Street
- CREATE Positive Impacts Award – Kellie Addicoat, MacKillop Family Services
- Child and Youth Empowerment Award – Commission for Children and Young People – Ministerial Youth Advisory Group (MYAG)
- Leaving a Legacy Award – Gerard Jones
- The Walda Blow Aboriginal Children and Young People Award – North East Melbourne Area Aboriginal Family Led Decision Maker Convenors, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Quotes attributable to Minister for Child Protection and Family Services Colin Brooks

"These awards recognise Victorian organisations, workers, carers and community members from across the state's children and families services system – who all make Victoria a better, safer place to live."

"I'm proud to celebrate these exceptional Victorians who keep children safe and families strong every day and want to thank all of this year's winners, finalists and entrants for the crucial work they do."

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